(a) whether Government is considering a Southern Gas Grid Project, convering States of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh to connect the K.G. Basin Gas through all these States;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the progress made so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Gas pipelines are laid according to gas availability and connect production and consumption centers. A network of trunk gas pipelines is being laid connecting customers in the southern part of the country to various sources of natural gas.

Currently GAIL (India) Limited has pipeline network in Krishna-Godavari basin and Cauvery basin in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu respectively. Reliance Gas Transportation Infrastructure Limited (RGTIL) is constructing Kakinada-Hyderabad-Uran-Ahmedabad pipeline, which would *inter alia* connect parts of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to the KG-D6 field. RGTIL has also been granted authorization for Vijayawada-Nellore-Chennai pipeline, as also its extensions Chennai-Tuticorin and Chennai-Bangalore-Mangalore pipelines; these pipelines would connect parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka to the KG-D6 field. GAIL has been granted authorization for Dabhol-Bangalore pipeline; this would be a bi-directional pipeline transporting Re-gasified LNG from Dabhol LNG terminal to Bangalore and natural gas from RGTIL's pipeline at Bangalore to Maharashtra. GAIL has also been granted authorization for Kochi-Kanjirakkod-Mangalore/Bangalore pipeline; this would also be a bi-directional pipeline transporting Re-gasified LNG from the upcoming Kochi LNG terminal to Kerala and Karnataka, and natural gas from RGTIL's pipeline.

Transit fee for Indo-Iran Gas Pipiline

572. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposal for three nation gas pipeline consisting of India, Iran and Pakistan is in progress;

(b) if so, the present status of above deal in detail;

(c) the steps taken, if any, to resolve the transit fee issue associated with the project; and

(d) the details of steps taken to resolve the technical issues between the participating countries, if any, and the period of implementation of the project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (d) India has been pursuing the import of natural gas from Iran through the Iran-Pakistan-India (IPI) transnational gas pipeline. Important issues concerning the implementation of the Project, including *inter alia* project structure, gas price, transportation tariff and transit fee for passage of gas through Pakistan, are under discussion amongst the participating countries at bilateral and trilateral levels. Five meetings of India-Pakistan Joint Working Group (JWG) have been held so far. Three meetings of India-Iran Special JWG and six tripartite meetings have been held so far. India is yet to respond to price formula presented by Iran during the 4th tripartite meeting, as the price payable by India would also include cost of transportation of gas and transit fee to be payable to Pakistan for passage of gas within Pakistani territory. These issues are under discussion with Pakistan.

Such multilateral projects involve protracted discussions, as all the aspects have to be carefully examined and deliberated upon to the satisfaction of the participating countries to protect each country's interests and avoid any problems in the future in the successful opeation of the project. It would take about 30-36 months for completion of the project after financial closure.

Supply of LPG

573. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any shortage in the supply of liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) for domestic purpose in the month of January and February, 2008;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the steps taken to resolve the same; and

(d) the quantity of LPG supplied to various States in total, for commercial and cooking purpose for the last six months, month-wise category-wise, and State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL) (a) to (c) Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the OMCs through indegenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors. OMCs have further reported that they have supplied 8450 TMT (Thousand Metric Tonnes) of domestic LPG in the country during the period-April, 2007-January, 2008 as against 8030 TMT during the corresponding period of last year.

However, OMCs had reported backlog in LPG supplies in certain States in the country in the months of January & February, 2008 due to reduction in supply of bulk LPG by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) & Essar Oil Limited in January 2008, delay in movement of bulk LPG by rail from Jamnagar to the Northern Region, increased demand in the States due to severe cold which resulted in panic booking by the customers, strikes by contract labour, agitational activities, delays in berthing of vessels at Haldia Port due to reduced draft, bandhs etc.

Government has advised OMCs to liquidate the backlog in the States by operating the bottling plants on holidays and during extended hours. Increased bottling is also being done during the working days for early clearance of backlog.

(d) OMCs have reported they have supplied 5254 TMT (Thousand Metric Tonnes) of domestic LPG and 302 TMT of non-domestic LPG during the period from August, 2007 to January, 2008 in the country. The State-wise and month-wise details are available with the Directors (Marketing) of the concerned OMCs.

Investment of by Oil PSUs

574. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether country's major oil PSUs including ONGC, OVL, IOC, HPCL, BPCL and GAIL will together invest more than Rs. 2,69,000 crore in next five years;

(b) whether the proposed investment would be in domestic oil and gas hunt, overseas acquisition and expansion of refineries during Eleventh Plan period;